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ABSTRACT

Principals perform many, varied instructional and managerial tasks. Steps in the selection process in a school division fall into four categories: developing policies; establishing a pool; formal selection procedures; and post-hiring activities. When selectors evaluate individual candidates for a position, they use one or more of five basic models: biographical data; written tests; structured interviews; job samples; and assessment centers. Several public school districts have designed professional development programs for potential and current school principals and other administrative and/or supervisory staff. The practices of the following school districts are the focus of the paper: (1) Charlotte/Mecklinburg Unified School District (Charlotte, North Carolina); (2) Ector County Public School District (Odessa, Texas); (3) Howard County Public Schools (Columbia, Maryland); (4) Montgomery County Public School District (Rockville, Maryland); (5) Norfolk City Public Schools (Norfolk, Virginia); and (6) San Luis Coastal Unified School District (San Luis Obispo, California). (SI)

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SELECTION PROCEDURES AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR NEW ADMINISTRATORS: A SUMMARY OF PRACTICES IN SELECTED SCHOOL DIVISIONS

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VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Introduction

The principal of a school performs many, varied instructional and managerial tasks. They include

1. establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning;
2. setting high expectations for faculty, staff, and students;
3. setting school goals;
4. supervising teaching and curriculum development;
5. communicating effectively inside the school;
6. building parent and community support;
7. building sound relations with the central office;
8. monitoring organizational information;
9. coordinating school activities;
10. managing financial resources;
11. maintaining the school building;
12. directing school support services; and
13. staffing.

Steps in the selection process in a school division generally fall into the following categories:

Developing Policies

Step 1 Agree on general aims for the schools and principals in your jurisdiction.

- Consult district or governing body.
- Consult teachers, students, parents, and community concerning what kind of principal they want and need.

Establishing a Pool

Step 2 Determine what kind of preservice preparation is available and what kind is necessary.

- Check on programs at local universities.

- Consider initiating or developing one within the system.

Step 3 Determine certification requirements and procedures.

Step 4 Prepare qualified potential principals via apprenticeships, internships, and mentoring.

Formal Selection Procedures

Step 5 Advertise the vacancy widely among qualified potential applicants.

Step 6 Assess candidates' skills using the selection methods best calculated to discover information that is needed.

Step 7 Choose a new principal based on relevant, valid information.

Post-Hiring Activities

Step 8 Provide orientation for new principals, enabling them to meet members of the community, get to know their peers, and understand the nature and history of the school and community.

Step 9 Develop long-term programs that give principals multiple opportunities to develop their professional skills and enlarge their peer network.

Step 10 Appraise principals according to the selection criteria used to hire them, providing constructive feedback on their performance, and helping them improve via conferences, coaching, networking, and special training.

When selectors evaluate individual candidates for a position, they use one or more of five basic methods. The methods used appraise candidates from both the theoretical and practical standpoint. The five selection methods include

1. biographical data;

2. written tests;

3. structured interviews;

4. job samples; and

5. assessment centers.

School District Models

Several public school districts have designed professional development programs to identify, assess, and develop leadership skills. Extensive programs are often available for potential and current school principals and other administrative and/or supervisory staff.

Administrative Academy Programs for Principals, Instructional Leadership Center, Charlotte/Mecklinburg Unified School District, Charlotte, NC

The Charlotte/Mecklinburg Unified School District is in the fourth year of a pilot program for professional development of school administrators. Parts of this program will be used in the development of programs for the identification and assessment of potential administrators. The program, when fully implemented, will include the following areas:

1. Workshops for school administrators which have varied from year to year from three days to five days (Currently implemented)

2. A program to assess the performance of administrators (To be implemented)

3. A program for the identification and assessment of potential administrators (To be implemented)

The current program trains only principals and assistant principals. Administrators participate in a forty-hour program entitled Introduction to Management. The program's format is assessed annually and is based largely on the results of a survey of principals as to their needs and interests.

The program sessions are largely based on situational leadership concepts. In the sessions, activities including the following topics are presented:

1. Creativity - Lateral and Divergent Thinking

2. You, Your Job, and the Organization

3. Hierarchy and the Organization of the System

4. Management Styles (Using the Myers-Briggs Test and Its Analysis)

5. Communications Skills for the Effective Manager

6. Values Clarification (Videotapes by the Morrris Massey Triad: What You Are Is What You Were When)

7. Productive and Creative Meetings

8. Collaborative/Cooperative Groups (Developing Strategies and Solutions)

9. Excellence in Management

10. Managing for Effective Change

11. Stress and Change

12. Instructional Leadership Through Team Building

    a. Cooperative Learning

    b. Empowered Manager

13. Community and Human Relations

School Division Contact: Kathleen Maloney Tarr, Visiting Fellow, Administrative Academy
Jane McCanney, Visiting Fellow, Administrative Academy

The Program for the Identification, Assessment, and Development of Prospective Principals, Ector County Public Schools, Odessa, Texas

The Ector County Public School District has initiated an administrative training program. Recognizing the critical need to systematically identify and train individuals for future administrative positions, the district superintendent established the program as follows:

1. To provide a "trial period" for prospective administrators under actual school conditions

2. To provide the opportunity for the prospective administrator to practice a cooperatively planned program

3. To provide learning situations where the experienced practitioners share in the training of prospective administrators

4. To provide individualized training experiences for prospective administrators

Selection of Personnel for Administrative Positions, Howard County, Public Schools, Columbia, MD

Within Howard County, the Board of Education, through its policy on promotion for certificated personnel to administrative and supervisory positions, seeks to encourage promotion of applicants from within the local school system. Thus, the Board provides in-service programs for personnel who are interested in career advancement. Non-certificated administrative and supervisory considerations, except as may be required by law, are not included in the selection process within this policy.

The following terms are defined in the Howard County Schools policy for promotion:

1. Certificated Administrative and Supervisory Positions. These positions, which apply to those below the level of director, involve the administration and operation of the school system. The Department of Education of Howard County requires appropriate certification which may be beyond the standard teaching certificate and other standards required by the Maryland State Department of Education. Persons in these positions receive an index of supplement which is used for the assignment of salary.

2. Non-Certificated Administrative and Supervisory Positions. Positions in this group fall within the category of Administrative Management and Technical Support.

3. Assessment Center. The Assessment Center is a formal procedure incorporating both group and individual exercises specifically related to a particular level of management. Trained assessors observe and evaluate the behavior of administrative candidates on twelve skill dimensions. Each candidate receives an oral and written feedback report which includes a narrative profile on the twelve skill dimensions and a summative evaluation of highly recommend, recommend, or not recommend for a school-based administrative position. The Howard County Assessment Center is modeled after the guidelines and procedures of the National Association of Secondary Principals' (NASSP) Assessment Center.

4. School-Based Administrator. School-Based Administrator refers to principal and assistant principal.

General procedures for certificated administrative and supervisory positions include the following:

1. Vacancies occurring during the summer when schools are closed are announced through circulars, published notices in local newspapers, and to the exclusive bargaining unit's offices. Teachers interested in being notified of administrative or supervisory vacancies while schools are closed notify the personnel office prior to the close of the school year.

2. Candidates must submit a letter of application and appropriate application forms, transcripts, references, and other specified information to the personnel office by the end of the day on the closing date designated in the advertisement. All documentation must be complete in order to be eligible for consideration.

3. Credentials are reviewed by staff in the personnel office to determine eligibility within the specifications of the job description.

4. An interview team is designated by the superintendent. The interview team consists of at least five persons for all certificated administrative and supervisory positions. At least one member of the interview team must be presently assigned to a position which is comparable in level of responsibility and/or specialized skills required in the position for which the candidates are applying.

5. The interview team, as a whole, screens the credentials of eligible applicants to determine who should be interviewed. Candidates who are eliminated in the preliminary screening receive written notification prior to the scheduled interviews for the vacancy.

6. Upon completion of the interviews, the interview team, by majority vote, selects and recommends candidate(s) in alphabetical order to the superintendent.

7. The superintendent may recommend to the Board of Education the appointment of a candidate from the recommended list or reject all and request that the vacancy be advertised again.

8. The director of Staff Personnel Services or a designee is available to discuss aspects of the interview procedures with applicants.

For school-based administrators, all of the above general procedures for certificated administrative and supervisory positions apply except for Item 4.

1. All persons, currently employed in the Howard County Public School System and holding Administrative/Supervisory Certification, are eligible to participate in the Assessment Center. Participation in the Howard County Assessment Center is a requirement for Howard County Public School employees who apply for school-based administrative positions. Exceptions are made for persons who have service satisfactorily for a period of two or more years and within the last three years, inside or outside of Howard County, in the position for which he/she is applying. In addition, the Howard County employee must have received a recommendation via the assessment center process for that school-based administrative vacancy.

2. Teachers outside of Howard County will be considered for assistant principal positions only if they have performed in another NASSP Assessment Center at an exemplary level.

3. Persons outside of Howard County who currently hold a position of assistant principal, principal, or higher may apply and be considered for school-based administrative vacancies. These candidates will be invited for one full day of additional screening and assessment activities, conducted by the interview team, after meeting the following criteria:

   a. Demonstration of highly successful administrative experience in a position comparable to the one for which they are applying

   b. Presentation of documentation which verifies training and background experiences and indicates potential for outstanding contributions to the Howard County Public Schools

   A candidate outside of Howard County who is assessed by the interview team as an administrator with excellent potential and is not selected for an announced vacancy could be considered as viable for

comparable positions for a three-year period of time without having to be processed through the same full-day assessment activities.

4. The interview team is designated by the Superintendent and consists of five trained assessors for all school-based administrative vacancies. At least two members of the interview team are to be school-based administrators. In addition, two members of the interview team are to be the director of Staff Personnel Services or a designee and the director of School Administration or designee. The team submits recommendations to the Superintendent.

School Division Contact: Dr. Reva R. Bryant, Director, Staff Personnel Services

Schools Program for the Identification, Assessment, and Development of Prospective Principals, Montgomery County, Public Schools, Rockville, MD

The Montgomery County Public School District has developed a comprehensive program for identifying, assessing, and developing administrative skills. The training components of the program have been described as (1) Leadership Training, Phase I and II; (2) An Internship Program, and (3) Assessment Center.

Phase I of the leadership training component is a noncredit, six-session series that covers topics such as interviewing skills, resume writing, availability of promotional opportunities, and panel discussions by on-the-job administrators and supervisors. The program has five objectives:

1. To provide information about career opportunities within the school system

2. To provide opportunities for self-assessment relative to leadership potential

3. To provide evaluations by administrative and supervisory personnel who assess the participant's leadership potential

4. To provide experience through simulated task and interview sessions that may be helpful in actual task or interview settings

5. To provide information about career planning

Activities that have been incorporated into this phase have included:

1. Self-Assessment and Job Awareness Sessions. During these sessions, participants complete a variety of self-assessment inventories to heighten their awareness of their leadership potential and style. In addition, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) personnel officers and others discuss selection procedures and career opportunities within the system. Participants can ask their principals to rate their leadership potential, using a format provided by the program coordinator.

2. Group Task Session. During this session, participants are divided into small groups to work on administrative problems. Each group is observed by two school-based administrators who evaluate and rank participants. The groups may be leaderless or each person, in turn, may be selected to act as leader of the group for a different problem.

3. Simulated Interviews. These trial employment interviews are conducted in those areas of interest expressed by participants. Supervisory personnel are asked to conduct interviews and then evaluate and rank the participants.

4. Feedback Sessions. During the session, participants review a data summary sheet, which includes their scores from the task-session observers, the interviewers, and peers. Individual conferences may be scheduled for additional discussion of personal concerns.

Phase I is designed to provide a foundation upon which participants can make intelligent decisions regarding administration as a career.

Phase II of the leadership training component is a three-credit, eighteen-week in-service course that provides in-depth study and experiential activities related to educational leadership. Phase II incorporates two major components: (1) theory and (2) practice. Topics include leadership styles, conflict resolution, oral and written communication, group process, decision making, problem solving, uses of power, and time/stress management. The topics presented provide the opportunities to

1. learn more about the roles and responsibilities of those in administrative and supervisory positions in the school system;

2. learn about administrative problems and issues in the school system;

3. explore and study concepts, theories, and models relating to leadership and administration; and
4. develop skills useful for leadership positions.

Based on system needs, advertisements are run annually to solicit applications for trainees and interns. After successfully completing the assessment and selection processes, elementary principal trainees and secondary assistant principal interns

1. receive specific school assignments;

2. participate in a year-long program to increase knowledge and refine skills;

3. receive on-the-job training by the principal of their school;

4. meet monthly with a five-member supervisory team composed of top-level system staff who assist them in analyzing their thinking and actions plus assess their performance for promotion; and

5. are put on the eligibility list for promotion (principalship list for elementary candidates and assistant principalship list for secondary candidates) upon successful completion of the program.

Montgomery County's Administrative Intern Program is depicted as "an intensive on-the-job training program." Applicants are ranked on the basis of degrees, experiences, certification, references, and evaluation. Thirty to eighty of the top candidates are invited to Administrative Competence sessions for an intensive assessment of their interpersonal skills, communication and conceptual skills, and group leadership skills. The candidates are given points for their performance on each activity and are then ranked.

Names of the top persons are placed on the administrative intern list for two years after the system's Appointment Committee has determined the number based on future projected needs of the system. When an opening for a principal occurs in a school, the superintendent decides on the placement of a current assistant principal or an administrative intern in that position. If the decision reached is the latter, selected persons from the list are interviewed by a panel. One person is selected to participate in the Administrative Intern Program.

The length of time the intern serves as assistant principal has been designated as one year to allow for appropriate preparation of the individual for the role of the principal. The scope of the intern's responsibilities

includes the instructional program, staff, pupil personnel, management, community involvement, and professional growth. The principal is responsible for the allocation of duties similar to those performed by an assistant principal. The principal is also the primary trainer and supervisor of the intern.

Incorporated into the internship program is a monthly seminar. The intern is responsible for conducting these seminars with his or her supervisory team. The team is composed of a central office associate superintendent, a representative from the staff development department, and a university representative or outside consultant. These seminars provide important feedback for the intern to examine behavior and style. Upon successful completion of the intern program, interns are placed as soon as possible as assistant principals.

Montgomery County utilizes the Assessment Center to review candidates for the school principalship. The assessment center project was initiated by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in 1975. Twelve behaviors and skills are observed in prospective candidates with potential for success in the principalship. They are described as follows:

1. Problem Analysis - Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation; searching for information with a purpose.

2. Judgement - Skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to reach logical conclusions and make highly-qualified decisions based on available information; ability to critically evaluate written communications.

3. Organizational Ability - Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.

4. Decisiveness - Ability to recognize when a decision is required and to act quickly (without an assessment of the quality of the decision).

5. Leadership - Ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to get others involved in solving problems, to effectively interact with a group, to guide group members to the accomplishment of a task.

6. Sensitivity - Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; tact in dealing with persons from different backgrounds; skill in resolving conflicts, ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.

7. Oral Communication Skill - Ability to make a clear oral presentation of ideas and facts.

8. Written Communication Skill - Ability to express ideas clearly in writing; to write appropriately for different audiences -- students, teachers, parents, other administrators.

9. Range of Interests - Competence to discuss a variety of subjects (educational, political, economic, etc.); desire to actively participate in events.

10. Personal Motivation - Showing that work is important to personal satisfaction; a need to achieve in all activities attempted; ability to be self-policing.

11. Educational Values - Possession of well-reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to change and new ideas.

12. Stress Tolerance - Ability to perform under pressure and opposition; ability to think on one's feet.

Following a review by the Appointment Committee of the candidates' credentials, recommendations, and personnel folders, candidates are invited to the center for a two-day intensive training period. Candidates participate in five exercises designed to give them an opportunity to demonstrate specific competencies needed by effective principals. Five areas that reflect specific skills and performance competencies are assessed, using data from position job descriptions and personnel evaluation forms for principals.

These skills and performance competencies include the following:

1. Group leadership and problem-solving skills

2. Supervisory skills, including evaluation of teachers

3. Oral presentation skills

4. Communication skills

5. Organization, management, and problem-solving skills

Candidates participate in evaluation exercises which consist of such tasks as group leadership, supervision, oral presentation written reaction task, and structured interview exercise. Candidates who successfully demonstrate the specific competencies needed by the effective principal during the Assessment Center are placed on an eligibility list for the position of school principal. Persons are interviewed for positions and a selection is made by the Appointment Committee. The superintendent recommends the appointment to the School Board.

School Division Contact: John Gannon, Staff Development Specialist, Administrative Training

Program for the Identification of Perspective Administrators, Norfolk City Public Schools, Norfolk, VA

Norfolk City Public Schools provides the following programs for individuals interested in preparing for administrative/supervisory positions within the school division:

1. Summer Orientation. The special two-day session provides for individuals aspiring to be a school principal the opportunity to participate in activities such as "a day in the life of a principal."

2. Program Series. Each semester, a program is held for interested individuals to expose them to skills which a prospective administrative/supervisory candidate would need to possess. Such skills include instructional assessment, curriculum development, leadership, principal's evaluation, and dealing effectively with in-baskets and delegation of responsibility.

3. Individual Interest. Persons from the school division who express an interest in advancing to administrative/supervisory positions are considered for appointment to the teacher specialist program as a training ground for future administrative appointment.

4. "Acting" Assistant Principal Positions. Teachers who aspire to administrative positions are paired with a school principal as a "buddy" to assist with administrative duties and paper work within the school.

5. Assessment Center. The school division currently refers twelve teachers who have exhibited the qualities of potential administrators to an assessment center.

School Division Contact: Ann Madison, Director of Staff Development

Richland School District No. 1, Columbia, South Carolina.

In 1980-81, the district initiated a program in cooperation with the University of South Carolina to develop new procedures to prepare personnel within the school division for principalships. The program features

1. full-time internships funded by the school system and made available to persons identified as potential administrators (emphasis on women and minorities), and

2. a course of study cooperatively sponsored by the school system and university to facilitate the narrowing of the gap between administrative theory and the practice of running a school.

Interested individuals are asked to respond to the district's announcement of the program. All applicants are interviewed by a committee of ten administrators from which ten participants were chosen. "Selection is based on merit . . . demonstrated creativity, leadership potential, communication skills, experience in urban education, and a strong academic background." Once selected, participants are paired with principals who can aptly guide their development and serve as their mentors.

The course of study incorporated into the Richland program contains the following components: (1) university courses, (2) seminars, (3) special institutes, (4) an individual improvement plan, and (5) local, state, and national professional development activities. The components are characterized as follows:

1. University Courses. To bridge the gap between theory and reality, the university teaches only theory that is rooted firmly in practical approaches to running schools. Examples: When discussing budgets, students are exposed to several different theories of budgets, but they also study in detail the actual budget of a local school division.

2. Seminars. Functioning as an effective member of the district's administrative team is demonstrated through a special series of seminars planned and presented by school personnel. Each of the following areas is covered in a meeting conducted by the person in charge: administration, maintenance, transportation, school food services, purchasing, personnel, instruction, and pupil services. The top administrator from each area

gives the interns a look at day-to-day operations and explains how problems in theses areas are solved.

3. Special Institutes. A number of in-depth retreats lasting several days is held during the course of the internships. At these meetings, interns, principals, central office administrators, board members, and university faculty members take part in group discussions and problem-solving exercises. The participants work in teams, break problems into small components, and offer suggested solutions.

4. Individual Improvement Plans. During the early stages of the internship, each participant is given a self-assessment questionnaire and is told to analyze his or her strengths and weaknesses. In turn, the project director, principals, and a university consultant use the results to develop individual improvement plans for interns. If an intern needs to know more about student scheduling, for example, the intern is given the opportunity to work closely with a principal to plan schedules.

   Each intern is also required to develop or refine a product (a student/teacher handbook or a school calendar) or a process (a class schedule or a student activities schedule) for the school in which he works. Another part of the plan calls for interns to participate in administrative activities, such as visiting the homes of students who are having discipline problems, or coordinating an emergency drill at school. These activities are designed to incorporate several major areas of a principal's responsibilities.

5. Local, State, and National Professional Development Activities. Interns also are encouraged to attend national and state meetings of administrators organizations - as funds permit. At these meetings interns have the chance not only to share ideas and take part in clinic programs, but also to rub elbows with some of the successful administrators in the state and nation.

School Division Contact: Gordon L. McAndrew, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel

Selection of High School Principal Using the Assessment Center Method, San Luis Coastal Unified School District, San Luis Obispo, CA

The administration of the San Luis Coastal Unified School District uses the Assessment Center method in the

selection of high school principals. The step-by-step process includes the following items:

1. "Real time" job analysis using input from incumbent high school principals and the superintendent (from which eleven critical performance domains are identified)

2. Activities in which participants must demonstrate the eleven domains, typically through observable behavior on the part of the candidates. Activities include

   a. an application consisting of a district form, a job-related supplemental application form, and a placement file;

   b. two leaderless discussion groups, one with a relatively simple topic, and the other with a more complex one;

   c. a structured background interview;

   d. a clinical supervision activity consisting of observation of a teaching segment on videotape, diagnosis of that segment, and preparation of a conference plan with the teacher;

   e. presentation of a speech to an audience consisting of students, parents, and teachers;

   f. an in-basket activity;

   g. a tour of the high school campus followed by a report on how the facilities could best be utilized and on how well they were/were not being maintained;

   h. a budgeting problem in which the candidate had to allocate limited funds among various departments and defend his/her recommendations;

   i. development and then defense of a mini-master schedule; and

   j. a writing examination to verify a high degree of competency in written English.

3. Observation of activities by trained assessors

4. Performance information yielded from the observed activities

5. Development of a master schedule

6. Intensive inservice training for all assessors

7. Debriefing session with assessors in which they are asked for their overall impressions of the candidates

Contact: James W. Marquis, Director of Personnel